

Missouri's 2nd "Show Me" Summit on Aging and Health
March 14-16, 2005
White House Conference on Aging Report

Name of the Event: Missouri's 2nd "Show Me" Summit on Aging and Health
Date of the Event: March 14-16, 2005
Location of the Event: Branson, Missouri
No. of persons attending: 525
Sponsoring Organization: Missouri Alliance of Area Agencies on Aging (MA4)
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Priority Issue # 1
Prescription Drugs

Barriers

- a. Information on the new Medicare Part D Prescription Drug plan is lacking. Seniors have little knowledge about what benefits it will provide and how or if it will work with the state Senior Rx program now in existence.
- b. We must educate seniors to questions doctors about their prescriptions and not just assume they must take a prescribed drug forever.

Solutions

- a. Provide funding for education through the area agency on aging information network about Medicare Part D so the eligible senior can make an informed choice.
- b. Increase patient education on the different types of drugs so that the client is aware that the newest and often the most expensive drug may not necessarily be the one they have to take.

Understand that it is difficult to devise a solution to this issue until Part D becomes a reality.

Priority Issue # 2

Health Care

Barriers:

- a. Insurance pays too little of the cost and premiums are too high.
- b. Doctors' rates are excessive perhaps due to malpractice insurance cost.
- c. Doctors often order too many tests or they order a test that has already been given by the primary care physician, possibly to keep them from malpractice law suits.
- d. Health Care is very limited in rural areas and seniors must travel frequently very long distances to acquire needed specialist.

Solutions:

- a. Educate seniors about self - management strategies for maintaining good health.
- b. Provide increased funding for county and rural health departments, so that seniors may receive necessary care in their own community.
- c. Educate individuals to take responsibility for their own health issues, i.e. smoking cessation, proper diet, the value of exercise to their well being.
- d. Mandate increased accountability from insurance companies to their policy holders. Insist that when the insurance company gives prior approval for treatment they must follow through with payment.
- e. Improve transportation so that it doesn't require an all day trip to see a doctor.

Priority # 3

Medicare

Barriers:

- a. With out a good affordable Medi-Gap Insurance Policy the amounts paid by Medicare leave the senior with excessive out of pocket costs.
- b. In-home services are too restrictive

Solutions:

- a. Mandate that Medicare revise it's allocation of funds. Seniors are often sent home from the hospital very sick after a very short stay.
- b. Home health care should be more available with fewer restrictions for an increased period of time. This would allow seniors to be independent longer.

Priority # 4

Abuse Neglect and Exploitation

Barriers:

- a. Seniors do not want to share with others that they have been exploited financially or physically abused, particularly if the abuse is by a family member.
- b. Seniors do not often recognize that they are being neglected until the problem has escalated.

Solutions:

- a. Mandate that bank employees question and/or report unusual activity of the accounts of seniors who appear to be at risk
- b. Doctors need to take more time and ask probing questions when a senior frequently has bruises and unexplained accidents.
- c. Educate seniors to report incidents to the proper authority.

Priority # 5

Older Americans Act

Barriers

- a. Area Agencies on Aging are trying to serve a rapidly growing senior population while funding has not even kept up with inflation.
- b. Seniors are living longer and need more care to stay independent.
- c. The boomers are coming and will tax the system to its limits.

Solutions

- a. Increase funding for services without unfunded mandates
- b. Develop a sliding scale for some services rather than a contribution. Many seniors could and would pay for a service or a higher portion of the cost if it was allowable.
- c. Review the age limit for eligibility for service. Do people consider themselves a senior at 60? With the first baby boomers due to reach retirement age in the next decade, we will soon undergo a massive transformation. The aging of our society will have a huge impact on all aspects of American life.
- d. Utilize the White House Conference on Aging information for reauthorization of the Older Americans' Act.
- e. Train Seniors to advocate for the issues and services that will keep them independent.

A few statistics to define our conference from the respondents who completed our survey:

Age:

Under 60	49%
Over 60	30%
Over 75	7%
No response	14%

Gender

Female	74%
Male	10%
No response	16%

Income:

Under \$20,000	5%
\$20,000-40,000	47%
\$40,000 60,000	12%
Over \$60,000	18%
No response	18%

Ethnicity:

Caucasian	75%
African American	4%
Native American	5%
No response	16%